



GAIL FARBER, Director

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

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May 26, 2016

IN REPLY PLEASE

REFER TO FILE:

EP-1
A4372

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Gail Farber *Gail Farber*
Director of Public Works

BOARD MOTION OF MAY 26, 2015, ITEM NO. 7 REPORT BACK ON THE UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK PROGRAM

On May 26, 2015, the Board adopted ordinance amendments and fee increases for the Underground Storage Tank (UST) Program and instructed the Director of Public Works to report back in one year outlining the improvements made to the inspection and plan review process. The improvements to the UST Program are described below.

BACKGROUND

The UST Program was established by the Board of Supervisors in 1983 as a fee-based program. The Program regulates USTs in the unincorporated County areas and 77 cities within Los Angeles County. The primary goal is to ensure the proper storage of hazardous substances in USTs, thereby protecting public health and drinking water aquifers.

Over the past 15 years, new State UST laws and regulations have significantly increased the workload and costs for Public Works to meet regulations. However, with the exception of annual inflation adjustments, the fees had not been increased since 2001.

The Board's adoption of ordinance amendments on May 26, 2015, provided for a one-time increase in the annual UST permit maintenance fee as well as increases to other fees to fund plan review, inspection, and enforcement activities. To minimize the impact of the fees on UST owners, operators, and applicants, all of the fees (other than the annual permit maintenance fee) will be increased incrementally over the next four years.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS

With revenue collected through the increased fees, Public Works has implemented a series of improvements to the UST Program to address the increased workload from new State requirements and to improve customer service.

Staffing

Public Works hired three new Civil Engineering Assistants and three new Waste Control Engineering Inspectors. The new engineering and inspection staff have assisted in expediting the processing of existing and incoming applications, reviewing plans, reviewing required paper and electronic documentation, and reviewing inspection violations to bring facilities quickly back into compliance.

Stakeholder Working Group

Public Works convened a working group, which included broad representation from key affected industry stakeholders, including UST owners and operators, trade associations, and government agencies. The working group met on July 27, 2015, and on January 12, 2016, to discuss potential process improvements. The working group provided valuable input, including suggested changes in public counter and field inspection procedures to expedite plan reviews and to improve the inspection process. The industry stakeholder working group has been supportive of the following measures Public Works has taken to improve customer service.

Office and Field Process

To improve customer service at the Alhambra Headquarters public counter, Public Works assigned a new, permanent manager at the public counter to provide guidance to customers. Other improvements included providing an e-mail confirmation to customers when closure reports are received at the office; incorporating new online notifications to customers for emergency repair, closure sampling, and prior to backfill activities; and posting the standards of performance and policies on the website to provide the public easy access to UST Program requirements.

RESULTS

Since July 1, 2015, Public Works' improvements to the UST Program have produced the following results:

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- Decreased the average approval time for applications/plans from 13 months to 3 months.
- Approved 109 applications/plans over the counter.
- Reduced the existing queue of pending applications/plans from 1342 to 586.

As the remaining UST Program fee increases are phased in, Public Works will continue to evaluate and implement additional measures to streamline operations and improve customer service.

If you have any questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Daniel J. Lafferty at (626) 458-3500 or DLaff@dpw.lacounty.gov.

LM:ao

H/ao/EPD/UST Memo May 2016

cc: Chief Executive Office (Rochelle Goff)
County Counsel
Executive Office

AGN. NO. _____

MOTION BY MAYOR MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH

MAY 26, 2015

AMENDMENT TO ITEM #7

I, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Department of Public Works to:

- 1) Report back to the Board in one year outlining what improvements were made to the Underground Storage Tank inspection and plan review process to justify these fee increases and;
- 2) The automatic annual increase should be limited to CPI or 2%, whichever is less.

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ANTONOVICH _____

Relates to Item 7

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE

May 26, 2015

The Underground Storage Tank Program is critical and necessary to protect the health and safety of our residents and the underground aquifers that provide 33 percent of the region's drinking water supply. By properly regulating and inspecting underground tanks in the unincorporated areas and 77 cities, we can protect our communities against the harmful effects caused by leakage of hazardous materials stored underground.

The revised ordinance and proposed fee increase will ensure a fully functional and effective program that complies with State law and meets industry's needs, including timely completion of project reviews, timely follow-up violations, and more thorough inspections.

I appreciate the Department of Public Works' strong effort to reach out to the business community to explain the proposal, and its commitment to work with industry to review and improve existing processes to make them more responsive and

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customer-oriented.

I also want to thank the various business organizations, such as Los Angeles County Business Federation, Western States Petroleum Association, California Independent Oil Marketers Association, Tesoro Petroleum Corporation and others, for their constructive feedback and willingness to work with Public Works.

Since we are entering our fourth year of drought, it is more critical now than ever to protect our vital local water supply and public health.

I, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors approve the revisions to Title 11, Division 4 of the Los Angeles County Code pertaining to the regulations of Underground Storage Tanks.

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JM:di